

Memorandum

To: Gunnison City Council

From: John Messner

Date: 01/30/2014

Re: Repairs to Gunnison Whitewater Park

The Gunnison Whitewater Park, created in 2002, has become one of the most heavily used and promoted community assets in the Gunnison Valley. It was created to provide activities for a variety of users including fishermen, kayakers, rafters, swimmers and those who simply enjoy relaxing on the features and park that was created. During the summer months the Park attracts hundreds of users from all ages and demographics. The Park consists of two boat ramps, a trail system and three whitewater structures designed to create river flow hydraulics that enable "play spots" for recreational boaters. In addition, it is host every year to the very popular Gunnison River Festival which brings in boaters and spectators from all around the region to participate in activities revolving around our River ecosystems. The uses of the Gunnison Whitewater Park also helped secure a Recreational Inflow Water Right for the Gunnison River Basin.

Outdoor Recreation has become a major US industry, ranking third overall in annual consumer spending with \$646 billion in revenue (Outdoor Industry Association, 2012). Watersports, ie kayaking, rafting, co opening and motorized boating, has become the second highest source of revenue with participant spending reaching \$86 billion annually. According to the Protect the Flows technical report, watersports recreation along the Colorado River Basin produces \$26 billion in economic output (Southwick Associates, 2012). While no specific economic report has been produced on the Gunnison Whitewater Park, a study done on the whitewater park in Golden, Co shows that it generates \$2.5-4 million dollars in economic impact from everyday uses and special events (Buchanon, 2012).

In the Spring of 2013, local boaters and Gunnison County staff identified several potential structural issues with two of the existing whitewater features at the Gunnison Whitewater Park. In light of these issues McLaughlin Whitewater Design Group was retained to evaluate the existing whitewater features, identify any structural damage and provide recommendations to repair and deficiencies. Attached is the full report of their findings. To summarize they found significant structural damage/ instability in both structure 2 and structure 3 which includes the high probability of complete or partial structure failure in the near future as well as significant safety issues caused by the erosion/ failure of the existing features in the immediate term. They include in their evaluation suggestions on how to repair/ stabilize both structure 2 and 3 in order to create both safe and functional whitewater features that will have a more permanent functional life.

While this evaluation was a preliminary finding the Design Group is in the process of creating a more refined design and budget for the proposed repairs. The initial estimate of the repairs is in the ballpark of \$250-300,000. Gunnison County will be pursuing a GOCO grant in the amount of \$300,000 for the repairs at the Whitewater Park in which 10% of this amount must be a cash match, which will total \$30,000. The GOCO grant process looks very favorably on projects that

include partners in the matching cash portion of the application and we have reached out to the many different organizations and user groups that both utilize the park and understand its significance to our community. We would like to request a from the City of Gunnison \$5,000 to go towards the cash match. It is understood that the timing of the request does not fall within the budget planning timeframe, however due to the high probability of structural failure and the safety factors that are involved in this the fact is that immediate action must be taken to ensure that the Park is both a safe and functional amenity for the Gunnison Valley community. Thank you for your consideration on this request.

Sincerely,

John Messner